



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Tuesday, June 6, 2006

GOVERNOR VETOES HB 2577
Immigration bill is weak, ineffective and a political game

PHOENIX – Governor Janet Napolitano has vetoed House Bill 2577, a bill that purported to address issues of illegal immigration in Arizona. HB 2577 has been widely criticized, particularly by nearly all Arizona law enforcement officials, who say the trespass provisions of the bill would tie up their officers, waste time, cost millions and ultimately do absolutely nothing to stem the flow of illegal immigration into Arizona.

The bill is so bad, it's difficult to list all its problems. Among the reasons, the Governor believes the bill is unconstitutional, unworkable and bad public policy:

- **Amnesty.** The bill offers full amnesty for employers who hire illegal immigrants. An employer could avoid all legal penalties and fines and beat the rap simply by firing the illegally-hired employee.

Moreover, the bill contains a stunning provision: it forces taxpayers to pick up the cost of employers' bad behavior. If a fired employee sues the employer, all legal fees, court costs and damage awards would be charged back to the state – even if the employee was here illegally. It is uncapped, and could cost the state more than \$10 million.

In her veto letter, the Governor repeated her call for tough and realistic sanctions for those employers who hire illegal immigrants. She wrote, "Real sanctions are supposed to mean the lawbreaker pays a penalty, not that he gets paid by taxpayers. "

- **Creates new government bureaucracy.** In an expensive and unconstitutional move, the bill attempts to create a whole new layer of government that merely serves to force local law enforcement to jump through administrative hoops to acquire necessary funding.
- **Strains local law enforcement to the breaking point.** Nearly every law enforcement agency in Arizona opposes this bill because of its attempt to apply trespassing laws to the immigration problem. Rather than investigating rape, arson, assault and burglary, local law enforcement agencies instead would be forced to devote an overwhelming portion of their resources to arresting and jailing immigrants on misdemeanor trespassing charges.

Governor Napolitano has – and continues – to keep her work focused on legal and constitutional action to control immigration at the state level, as well as substantive federal immigration reform.

Her work has achieved results:

- The Governor prevailed on the Bush administration to pay for National Guard members at the border.
- The Fraudulent ID Task Force, created by the Governor last year, has made more than 100 arrests and has broken several large criminal organizations involved in manufacturing the fake identification used in illegal immigration.
- As Attorney General, she engineered drafting and passage of the law that allows investigators to use the “damming warrant” technique to target the money flow of human smuggling syndicates and interdict their operations.
- The Governor signed legislation last year that made human trafficking a crime under Arizona law.

The Governor has repeatedly offered to work with Republican legislative leadership to create comprehensive immigration reform at the state level. In the veto letter, she wrote:

“Indeed, your failure to work with me to develop a more comprehensive bill, coupled with your unilateral decision to stock this bill full of provisions you know are opposed by our border communities, law enforcement agencies, and me, confirms that you view this bill more as a political game than as a serious effort to protect the border.”

Governor Napolitano believes the most effective and realistic way to solve the problem of illegal immigration is a comprehensive approach that includes real employer sanctions; tougher enforcement including the use of technology at the border; streamlining of the visa process and a guest worker program that acknowledges the economic drive behind illegal immigration.

A copy of the Governor’s veto letter is attached.